

## COSTINGS OF LIBRARY TECHNICAL SERVICES: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

James Dearnley

### Introduction

In late 1992 the UK Serials Group was approached by the Association of Subscription Agents to investigate the possibilities of a research project based on actual costings of ordering, acquiring and processing serials within academic and research libraries. As a first step the Committee decided to commission a bibliography of all relevant published sources relating to internal library costs. This was completed in January 1993 and subsequently presented to the UKSG and ASA committees. It was felt by both groups that the information would be of interest to their members and should reach a wider audience.

It is interesting to note that nearly all research on internal costings has been carried out in the United States, and this is reflected in the bibliography. The articles have been divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' categories, comprising 11 and 26 articles respectively. All 'primary' articles are abstracted, secondary articles are given full references.

### Primary sources

Anderson, M. L.

#### The cost of payment: library invoice payment operations.

*The Acquisitions Librarian*, 4, 1990, 85-97. 15 refs.

The objective of the payment operation is to expend efficiently funds for materials received into the library to create a record of payment and all related financial transactions. This demands strict internal accounting and administrative controls. Effective implementation of these controls is designed to safeguard library assets, promoting efficiency and reducing costs.

Understanding of accounting and financial controls should allow more efficient methods of payment and lead to a greater utilisation of resources.

Anderson, S.

#### No more free ride: cost analysis in the serials department. In:

Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage and justify internal operations.*

Neal Schuman, 1989, pp. 119-123.

This article concentrates on a 1984 study of cost analysis in a United States medical library's serials department. The study analyses time needed to perform activities, resulting costs, developing performance measures, measuring existing work patterns for possible inefficiency and whether by changing practices the department could be made more cost efficient. Provides a method for determining labour costs for all activities, with examples.

Bierman, K. J.

#### What does it cost to acquire a book? The Tucson public library experience. In:

Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage and justify internal operations.*

Neal-Schuman, 1989, pp. 79 - 95.

The article sets out in detail methodology used to calculate costs in the library's acquisitions department. This study bases its estimated costs on average in minutes taken to undergo all tasks in the department over weekly periods. The study is very detailed and reference is made to common pitfalls and problems which can be encountered in this type of cost analysis. An appendix shows how the library went about designing the study.

---

James Dearnley is a postgraduate student at Loughborough University Library, Leics LE11 3TU

**Boissonnas, C. M.**

**Acquisitions cost study at Cornell University library.** In:

Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage and justify internal operations.*

Neal-Schuman, 1989, pp. 69-78.

Functional cost benefit analysis is used to measure seven separate tasks in the acquisitions department; time studies were used on employees by observation and self timing. Tasks for analysis were well defined, allowing the potential for future studies to determine whether savings had been made. Demonstrates problems of cost benefit analysis by comparing Cornell's study with an outside firm's consequent cost benefit analysis of the same library and the differences found.

**Clark, M. S.**

**The cost of processing invoices.**

*Acquisitions Librarian*, 4, 1990, 99-107. 3 refs.

Analyses of the costs of acquiring materials often overlook the cost of processing invoices. Handling an invoice can add \$5-10 to the cost of an item. The components of invoice processing are reviewed. Librarians need to evaluate work flow and acquisitions policies to reduce these expenses.

**Coffey, J. R.**

**Identifying personnel costs in library acquisitions.**

*Acquisitions Librarian*, 4, 1990, 55-74. 8 refs.

Discusses the cost of personnel in library acquisitions departments. Considers interviewing and hiring; employee attitudes; training; consultation; performance evaluation; non-productive time; mistakes; absenteeism and staff development. Each factor is analysed for cost implications and examined to show how they contribute to rising costs when not carefully controlled. There is a discussion on measuring services and productivity and suggestions for further investigation.

**Coplen, R.**

**Subscription agents: to use or not to use.**

*Special Libraries*, 70 (12), 1979, 519-526. 3 refs.

To make a reasoned decision on whether or not to use a subscription agent the librarian must know how to compile and use statistics. This topic is discussed along with other considerations which should be taken into account when selecting (or not) subscription agents. Includes methodology and costing procedures for serials.

**Haack-Lomker, L.**

**Serials check-in cost study: a methodology.**

In:

Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage, and justify internal operations.*

Neal-Schuman, 1989, pp. 124-134.

This article divides measuring costs in an acquisitions department into three sections: pre check-in; check-in and post check-in.

This methodology was tested on three unnamed universities' libraries and the results are analysed in text and tables. Special reference is made to the problems of comparing different sized libraries with differing levels of organisational complexity and the effect on staff of observing for gaining results.

**Haynes, T. T.**

**Costing acquisitions: an annotated bibliography.**

*Acquisitions Librarian*, 4, 1990, 109-117.

This bibliography provides a starting point for written material on costings, including articles on background, theory, methodology and applications. It includes a range of material written for the uninitiated and experienced. Fully annotated.

Pitkin, G. M.

**Technical services costs case study.** In: Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage and justify internal operations.* Neal-Schuman, 1989, pp. 135-148.

This article is a case study of a 1980 costing programme at Sangamon State University, Illinois, where cuts of \$25,000 had to be made. By measuring internal costs using a method devised by William Axford some functions were found to be unnecessary and remedial measures were then taken. Similar studies followed at two other institutions with similar results. The analysis itself was done by computer after inputting of data. The author makes the point that confidence in techniques used have to be shared by top management if changes are to be made.

Reid, M. T. & Bengtson, B. G.

**Report on technical services costs. A preconference to the 1986 ALA annual conference.**

*Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 10, 1986, 231-236.

Summarises three lectures at the 1986 ALA conference which centred on technical services costs. These lectures included: costing methodologies and applications; the necessity of costing; the superficiality of costing; case study reports; technical services; and the ARL experience.

#### Secondary sources

Aren, L. J. & Webreck, S. J

**Costing library operations - a bibliography.** *Collection Building*, 8 (3), 1985, 23-28.

Bonk, S. C.

**Toward a methodology of evaluating serials vendors.**

*Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 9 (1), 1985, 51-60. 21 refs.

Clasquin, F. F.

**The jobber's side: cost of acquiring periodicals.** *RQ*, Summer, 1971, 328-330.

Cummings, M. M.

**The economics of research libraries.** Washington DC: Council on Library Resources, 1986.

Hayes, S.

**What does it really cost to run your library?** *Journal of Library Administration*, 1 (2), 1980, 1-10.

Inter, S. S.

**Choosing and using subscription agents in sci-tech libraries: theory and practice.** *Science and Technology Libraries*, 5 (3), 1985, 121-122.

Kantor, P.

**Cost and productivity in library operations.** *Proceedings of the 46th ASIS Annual Meeting*, October 2 - 6th 1983. pp. 297-300. 7 refs.

Kuntz, H.

**Serials agents: selection and evaluation.** *Serials Librarian*, 2 (2), Winter, 1977, 139-150. 8 refs.

Maffeo, S. E.

**Invoice payment by library acquisitions: a controlled time to study.** *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 5, 1981, 67-71.

Magson, M. S.

**Techniques for the measurement of cost benefit in information centres.** *Aslib Proceedings*, 25 (5), May 1973, 164-185. 9 refs.

McElroy, A. R.

**Library information service evaluation: a case-history from pharmaceutical R and D.** *Aslib Proceedings*, 34 (5), May, 1982, 249-264. 14 refs.

**McGregor, J. W..**

**Serials staffing in academic libraries.**

*Serials Librarian*, 1 (3), 1977, 259-272.

**Merriman, J. B.**

**Subscription agents - are they worth their salt?**

*Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 13 (2), 1989, 149-152.

**Merriman, J. B.**

**Publisher, vendor, librarian - uneasy alliance.**

*Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 12 (2), 1988, 155-158.

**Mitchell, B. J. (ed)**

**Cost analysis of library functions: a total system approach.**

Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1978.

**Mosey, J.**

**Annotated bibliography, 1970-1988.** In:

Pitkin, G. (ed.), *Cost-effective technical services. How to track, manage, and justify internal operations.* Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1989. pp. 183-284.

**Paul, H.**

**Are subscription agents worth their keep?**

*Serials Librarian*, 7 (1), 1982, 31-41. 29 refs.

**Prior, A.**

**How serials agents can help libraries cut costs.**

*Proceedings of the UK Serials Group Conference*, 1979, 44-55. 5 refs.

**Singleton, A. & Cooper, A.**

**The role of subscription agents.**

University of Leicester: Primary Communications Research Centre, 1981. (BLRD Report 5621)

**Smith, G. C. K.**

**Administrative effectiveness: times and costs of library operations.**

*Journal of Librarianship*, 3 (4), 1971, 245-266. 8 refs.

**Spec Kit 125**

**Technical services cost studies in ARL Libraries.**

Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries June 1986.

**Sze, M. C. & Naznitsky, I.**

**From subscription agency to direct publisher service.**

*Serials Librarian*, 20 (2/3), 1991, 31-35.

**Treadwell, J. & Ketcham, L.**

**The serials marketplace,**

*Library Journal*, 116 (10), 1991, 83-88.

**Virgo, J. A. C.**

**Costing and pricing information services.**

*Drexel Library Quarterly*, 21 (3), 1985, 75-98. 16 refs.

**Wernstedt, I. J..**

**Serial supplier controversy revisited.**

*Science and Technology Libraries*, 5 (3), 1985, 113-119. 5 refs.

**Whitehall, T.**

**User valuations and resource management for information services.**

*Aslib Proceedings*, 32 (2), 1980, 87-105. 56 refs.